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CUSTOM RATES PAID BY IOWA FARMERS

Survey reports use of custom work and the range of prices paid. Data is summarized by nine crop reporting districts. The average rate, most frequent rate, and the range of rates are given for 38 different kinds of custom work.

by H. B. Howell and Harold Hill

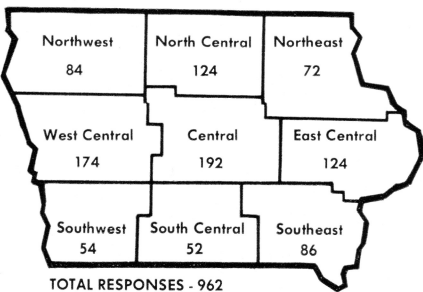
NEARLY EVERY Iowa farmer has hired some of his farm work done or has performed some custom work himself. A continuing problem is determining rates for custom work that are fair to both parties involved.

A "farm work cost guide" is published each January in *Iowa Farm Science*. But labor, management, and risk of ownership are not included in those figures. So we surveyed a number of Iowa farmers to find out what rates were actually being paid.

Our March 1966 survey revealed a wide use of custom work and a wide range of prices paid.

The Study . . .

Questionnaires were mailed to members of the Iowa Farm Business Association. The members were asked to report the actual rates they were paying or the going rate in their community if they were familiar with it. All custom rates reported were to include machine, power, fuel, and operator unless otherwise indicated.



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item is given in the first column. This indicates the frequency of custom work activity and provides a criterion for the reliability of the data.

The second and third columns give the average and the most frequent rate reported for each item. The last column provides the range of rates.

The last three items in table 3 deal with cash wages paid for hired labor by the hour, day, and month. The average rate, the most frequent rate, and the range are also reported here. It is interesting to note that there were very few reports of wages paid by the day. We gathered no information on additional items provided, such as housing and board.

Table 2 shows the operations which were reported too infrequently in any one crop reporting area to be significant. The state averages, however, may give some guidelines.

Table 1 reports tractor rental rates (by size of tractor) without operator or fuel furnished. Tractor rental seems to be increasing but is still not widespread in Iowa. Here as in the operations reported in table 2, the number in any one crop reporting district is so small that only the state average is given.

No attempt was made to relate costs to the wide range in equipment size or local factors affecting individual rates. This resulted in a wide variation in rates for each operation. In most cases, however, this variation reflects the size of equipment. Therefore, the rates reported should be a useful guideline in determining the going rate.

The Results . . .

We had 962 responses to the questionnaires. The map indicates the number of responses by crop reporting districts.

The data from the questionnaires is summarized by the nine crop reporting districts in table 3. The number of persons reporting each

TABLE 1. Tractor rental rates without operator or fuel furnished.

Tractor size	Number reporting	Average per acre	Number reporting	Average per hour
3 bottom	3	2.17	19	2.32
4 bottom	25	3.45	43	2.89
5 bottom	17	3.20	24	4.04
6 bottom	5	4.00	1	3.50

TABLE 2. Miscellaneous custom rates (number of responses too small to reported by districts).

	Number reporting	Average
Hay mowing, conditioning, and raking (combined)	17	\$ 2.37
Hay, field chopping, per acre	17	6.59
per ton	11	1.36
Silage—field harvesting, per ton	31	1.16
hauling, per acre	8	1.56
hauling, per ton	6	0.48
blowing, per acre	12	1.46
blowing, per ton	12	0.35
field harvesting, hauling and blowing, per ton	65	1.34
Ear corn picking, per hour	12	1.36
per bushel	11	0.08
Picker-sheller, per hour	8	10.94
per bushel	26	0.07
Corn combine, per hour	10	15.95
per bushel	35	0.08

TABLE 3. Custom rates paid by Iowa farmers.

Farming operation	Northwest district				North central district				Northeast district			
	No. rep.	Avg.	Most freq.	Range	No. rep.	Avg.	Most freq.	Range	No. rep.	Avg.	Most freq.	Range
Plowing, per acre.....	53	\$ 4.28	\$ 4.00	\$ 3.00- 6.00	61	\$ 4.07	\$ 4.00	\$ 3.00- 5.00	23	\$ 3.89	\$ 3.50	\$ 2.50- 5.00
Discing, per acre.....	19	1.35	1.50	0.50- 4.00	15	1.51	2.00	1.00- 2.50	14	1.42	1.50	1.00- 2.50
Planting corn, with fert. attach., per acre.....	33	1.73	1.50	0.75- 3.50	34	1.59	1.50	1.00- 2.50	30	1.78	2.00	1.00- 3.00
Planting soybeans, per acre.....	21	1.45	1.25	0.75- 2.50	27	1.31	1.25	0.75- 2.00	16	1.59	1.50	1.00- 3.00
Cultivating, per acre.....	16	1.12	1.00	0.50- 3.00	18	1.13	1.00	0.75- 1.50	10	1.31	1.00	1.00- 2.00
Combining soybeans, per acre.....	65	4.35	4.00	3.25- 5.50	89	4.40	4.50	3.50- 5.00	47	5.14	5.00	4.00- 6.00
Combining small grain, per acre.....	53	4.24	4.00	3.00- 6.00	59	4.85	4.50	3.50- 5.00	51	5.08	5.00	4.00- 6.00
Mowing, per acre.....	22	1.14	1.00	0.50- 1.75	17	1.25	1.25	0.75- 2.00	12	1.42	1.50	1.00- 2.00
Hay conditioning, per acre.....	35	1.12	1.00	0.50- 2.00	29	1.24	1.25	1.00- 1.50	24	1.42	1.50	1.00- 2.00
Hay conditioning, mach. only, per acre.....	12	1.04	1.00	0.50- 1.50	16	1.05	1.00	1.00- 1.25	3	1.25	1.00	1.00- 1.75
Hay raking, per acre.....	13	0.83	1.00	0.50- 1.25	10	1.08	1.00	0.75- 2.00	5	1.30	...	0.75- 2.00
Spraying (materials not included)												
weeds, per acre.....	49	1.05	1.00	0.50- 2.00	74	1.04	1.00	0.50- 1.50	34	1.02	1.00	0.50- 1.50
insects, per acre.....	24	1.04	1.00	0.75- 2.00	35	1.06	1.00	0.50- 1.50	7	1.04	1.00	0.50- 1.50
Fertilizer (application only)												
granular, per acre.....	55	0.70	0.50	0.50- 1.25	55	0.78	0.75	0.50- 1.50	34	0.92	1.00	0.50- 1.25
liquid, per acre.....	41	1.00	1.00	0.50- 2.50	48	1.13	1.00	0.75- 2.00	28	1.09	1.00	1.00- 1.50
gaseous, per acre.....	47	1.43	1.50	0.50- 2.50	79	1.45	1.50	1.00- 2.00	30	1.46	1.50	1.00- 2.00
Baling—wire, per bale.....	23	0.11	0.12	0.09- 0.12	25	0.11	0.10	0.09- 0.13	13	0.11	0.12	0.10- 0.12
twine, per bale.....	76	0.10	0.10	0.08- 0.14	92	0.10	0.10	0.08- 0.12	63	0.10	0.10	0.08- 0.12
Silage—field harvesting, per acre.....	3	9.00	10.00	7.00-10.00	4	9.50	10.00	6.00-12.00	0	...	...	...
per hour.....	20	10.60	10.00	7.50-15.00	14	11.30	10.00	9.00-15.00	10	10.20	10.00	8.00-13.50
hauling, per hour.....	6	2.20	2.00	1.00- 4.00	8	2.60	2.50	1.00- 4.00	5	2.40	2.00	2.00- 4.00
blowing, per hour.....	9	2.10	2.00	1.00- 4.00	7	2.90	...	1.00- 4.00	5	3.60	...	2.00- 5.00
Silage—harvesting, hauling & blowing												
combined, per acre.....	5	13.00	12.00	12.00-15.00	4	16.75	...	13.00-25.00	1	12.00	...	...
per hour.....	21	15.20	16.00	11.00-20.00	33	15.70	15.00	10.00-24.00	23	15.30	14.00	12.00-20.00
Field hay chopping, per hour.....	14	13.10	15.00	8.00-20.00	10	12.80	12.00	9.00-18.00	8	10.10	10.00	8.00-13.50
Ear corn picking, per acre.....	60	4.07	4.00	3.75- 5.00	84	4.09	4.00	3.00- 5.00	59	5.05	5.00	4.00- 6.00
Picker sheller, per acre.....	27	5.89	6.00	4.00- 7.00	47	6.27	6.00	5.00- 7.00	25	7.25	8.00	6.00- 8.00
Corn combining, per acre.....	30	6.16	6.00	5.00- 7.50	70	6.45	6.50	5.00- 7.50	41	7.15	7.50	5.00- 8.00
per acre plus }.....	1	5.00	...	...	4	4.38	...	4.00- 5.00	2	5.00	...	...
per bushel }.....		+0.03	...	...		+0.02	...	+0.02-+0.2		+0.04	...	...
Corn shelling, per bushel.....	74	0.023	0.025	0.02-0.035	109	0.02	0.02	0.02- 0.03	60	0.035	0.03	0.02- 0.05
Corn drying, per bushel.....	22	0.09	0.10	0.05- 0.10	30	0.08	0.08	0.05- 0.10	30	0.09	0.10	0.08- 0.10
per % moisture removed per bushel..	10	0.01	0.01	0.01- 0.02	25	0.01	0.01	0.01- 0.02	6	0.01	0.01	0.01- 0.01
Feed grinding, per bushel.....	20	0.04	0.04	0.02- 0.05	10	0.04	0.05	0.04- 0.05	5	0.07	...	0.04- 0.12
per ton.....	16	2.25	2.25	1.50- 4.00	35	2.42	2.00	1.50- 3.25	22	2.85	3.00	1.50- 4.00
Hired labor, per hour.....	63	1.30	1.25	1.00- 1.50	99	1.32	1.25	1.00- 2.00	59	1.22	1.25	1.00- 1.50
per day.....	3	12.30	...	10.00-15.00	6	10.90	...	8.00-12.50	6	9.83	...	8.00-12.00
per month.....	40	297	300	225-400	47	292	300	200-400	19	263	300	200-400

TABLE 3 (Continued). Custom rates paid by Iowa farmers.

Farming operation	West Central district				Central district				East Central district			
	No. rep.	Avg.	Most freq.	Range	No. rep.	Avg.	Most freq.	Range	No. rep.	Avg.	Most freq.	Range
Plowing, per acre.....	122	\$ 4.32	\$ 4.00	\$ 3.00- 6.00	122	\$ 4.22	\$ 4.00	\$ 2.50- 6.00	42	\$ 3.82	\$ 3.50	\$ 2.50- 6.00
Discing, per acre.....	40	1.60	1.50	1.00- 2.00	39	1.39	1.00	0.75- 3.50	14	1.48	1.00	1.00- 2.00
Planting corn, with fert. attach., per acre.....	60	1.72	1.50	1.00- 2.50	60	1.71	1.50	1.00- 4.00	32	1.81	2.00	1.00- 3.00
Planting soybeans, per acre.....	44	1.60	1.50	1.00- 2.00	45	1.41	1.50	1.00- 3.00	23	1.76	2.00	1.00- 3.00
Cultivating, per acre.....	35	1.25	1.00	0.75- 2.00	40	1.25	1.00	0.75- 2.50	12	1.28	1.50	0.75- 2.00
Combining soybeans, per acre.....	144	5.07	5.00	4.00- 7.00	136	4.60	5.00	4.05- 7.50	90	5.83	6.00	4.50- 7.00
Combining small grain, per acre.....	109	4.84	5.00	4.00- 6.00	90	4.64	4.00	3.50- 7.50	74	5.50	5.00	3.50- 7.00
Mowing, per acre.....	34	1.31	1.25	0.75- 2.50	36	1.21	1.00	0.75- 2.00	14	1.21	1.00	1.00- 1.50
Hay conditioning, per acre.....	32	1.44	1.50	1.00- 3.00	47	1.28	1.00	0.75- 2.00	37	1.20	1.00	1.00- 1.50
Hay conditioning, mach. only, per acre.....	12	1.18	1.00	1.00- 1.50	17	1.07	1.00	0.50- 1.50	7	0.96	1.00	0.50- 1.50
Hay raking, per acre.....	21	1.05	1.00	0.75- 1.50	18	1.08	1.00	0.50- 1.50	8	1.16	1.00	0.75- 1.50
Spraying (materials not included)												
weeds, per acre.....	77	0.97	1.00	0.75- 2.00	125	1.07	1.00	0.25- 2.00	50	1.08	1.00	0.35- 2.50
insects, per acre.....	45	1.05	1.00	0.50- 1.50	56	1.10	1.00	0.50- 2.00	17	1.02	1.00	0.50- 1.50
Fertilizer (application only)												
granular, per acre.....	89	0.90	0.75	0.50- 1.50	106	0.88	1.00	0.25- 2.00	67	1.01	1.00	0.50- 1.50
liquid, per acre.....	81	1.12	1.00	0.50- 1.75	88	1.15	1.00	0.50- 2.00	52	1.17	1.00	0.80- 2.00
gaseous, per acre.....	109	1.72	2.00	0.75- 2.50	112	1.59	1.50	0.50- 3.00	52	1.63	1.50	0.75- 2.50
Baling—wire, per bale.....	42	0.12	0.12	0.10- 0.15	38	0.12	0.12	0.10- 0.15	31	0.11	0.12	0.09- 0.14
twine, per bale.....	151	0.09	0.10	0.08- 0.12	157	0.10	0.10	0.08- 0.14	77	0.10	0.10	0.07- 0.15
Silage—field harvesting, per acre.....	16	8.40	10.00	6.00-10.00	9	8.80	10.00	4.50-12.00	2	8.30	...	6.50-10.00
per hour.....	42	9.80	10.00	7.00-15.00	31	10.40	10.00	5.50-16.00	4	9.80	...	8.00-11.00
hauling, per hour.....	11	3.30	4.00	2.25- 6.00	12	2.20	1.50	1.00- 5.00	0	...	...	...
blowing, per hour.....	7	2.21	2.00	1.00- 3.00	13	2.13	2.00	1.00- 5.00	0	...	...	...
Silage—harvesting, hauling & blowing combined, per acre.....	3	11.70	...	8.50-16.50	10	13.10	14.00	10.00-18.00	2	14.00	...	8.00-20.00
per hour.....	9	15.60	14.00	10.00-20.00	36	14.20	15.00	11.00-25.00	17	13.40	15.00	10.00-18.00
Field hay chopping, per hour.....	25	9.60	10.00	7.00-15.00	12	10.00	12.00	5.00-13.00	4	12.50	...	8.00-15.00
Ear corn picking, per acre.....	127	4.91	5.00	4.00- 7.00	122	4.47	4.00	3.50- 6.00	79	5.27	5.00	4.50- 6.50
Picker sheller, per acre.....	36	6.65	7.00	5.00- 8.00	65	6.72	7.00	5.50- 7.50	47	7.10	7.00	6.00- 8.00
Corn combining, per acre.....	67	6.74	7.00	5.00- 8.00	125	6.68	7.00	6.00-10.00	73	7.21	7.00	5.00- 8.50
per acre plus per bushel.....	44	5.10	5.00	4.00- 6.00	4	4.38	...	4.00- 5.00	6	5.33	5.00	5.00- 6.00
per bushel.....		+ 0.02	+ 0.02	+ 0.02- +.02		+ 0.02	...	+ 0.02- +.02		+ 0.024	+ 0.02	0.02- 0.03
Corn shelling, per bushel.....	154	0.024	0.025	0.02- 0.05	176	0.02	0.02	0.02- 0.04	100	0.026	0.03	0.02- 0.04
Corn drying, per bushel.....	35	0.07	0.10	0.03- 0.10	33	0.07	0.05	0.01- 0.12	30	0.08	0.10	0.05- 0.10
per % moisture removed per bushel..	5	0.01	0.01	0.01- 0.02	25	0.01	0.01	0.01- 0.02	22	0.01	0.01	0.01- 0.02
Feed grinding, per bushel.....	26	0.05	0.05	0.02- 0.07	17	0.05	0.05	0.02- 0.08	2	0.05	...	0.04- 0.06
per ton.....	22	2.06	2.00	1.40- 3.00	38	2.27	2.00	1.00- 5.00	30	3.06	3.00	1.50- 7.00
Hired labor, per hour.....	152	1.28	1.25	1.00- 1.50	153	1.35	1.25	1.00- 2.00	95	1.38	1.50	1.10- 1.75
per day.....	16	10.40	10.00	8.00-12.50	7	12.00	10.00	10.00-15.00	4	13.00	...	10.00-15.00
per month.....	62	284	300	200-400	53	294	300	175-400	45	282	300	180-400

TABLE 3 (Continued). Custom rates paid by Iowa farmers.

Farming operation	Southwest district				South Central district				Southeast district			
	No. rep.	Avg.	Most freq.	Range	No. rep.	Avg.	Most freq.	Range	No. rep.	Avg.	Most freq.	Range
Plowing, per acre.....	31	\$ 3.83	\$ 4.00	\$ 2.50- 5.00	23	\$ 4.20	\$ 5.00	\$ 3.00- 5.00	64	\$ 4.17	\$ 5.00	\$ 3.00- 5.00
Discing, per acre.....	13	1.60	1.50	1.00- 3.00	14	1.30	1.00	1.00- 3.00	21	1.42	1.50	1.00- 2.00
Planting corn, with fert. attach., per acre.....	14	1.76	1.50	1.00- 2.50	9	1.63	1.50	1.00- 3.00	22	1.89	2.00	1.50- 3.00
Planting soybeans, per acre.....	10	1.59	2.00	1.00- 2.25	8	1.62	...	1.00- 2.50	13	1.54	1.50	1.00- 2.00
Cultivating, per acre.....	10	1.25	1.00	1.00- 2.00	12	1.14	1.00	0.65- 1.50	10	1.16	1.00	1.00- 1.50
Combining soybeans, per acre.....	39	5.63	6.00	4.00- 6.50	41	5.54	5.00	4.00- 6.00	72	5.39	5.00	4.00- 7.00
Combining small grain, per acre.....	30	4.85	5.00	4.00- 6.00	37	4.80	5.00	4.00- 5.50	60	4.93	5.00	4.00- 6.00
Mowing, per acre.....	9	1.22	1.25	0.75- 1.85	12	1.21	1.25	0.75- 1.50	11	1.24	1.50	1.00- 2.00
Hay conditioning, per acre.....	3	1.45	1.25	1.25- 1.85	6	1.13	...	1.00- 1.25	12	1.29	1.50	0.75- 2.00
Hay conditioning, mach. only, per acre.....	1	1.00	...	...	3	1.17	1.00	1.00- 1.50	3	1.00	...	0.75- 1.25
Hay raking, per acre.....	3	1.03	...	0.25- 1.85	8	1.01	1.00	0.80- 1.50	7	0.86	1.00	0.50- 1.25
Spraying (materials not included)												
weeds, per acre.....	16	1.21	1.00	0.75- 2.50	25	1.18	1.00	0.75- 2.00	37	1.05	1.00	0.50- 2.00
insects, per acre.....	9	1.38	1.00	0.50- 2.50	15	1.10	1.00	0.75- 2.00	22	0.95	1.00	0.50- 2.00
Fertilizer (application only)												
granular, per acre.....	17	0.88	0.75	0.50- 1.50	20	1.06	1.00	0.75- 1.25	34	0.98	1.00	0.35- 1.50
liquid, per acre.....	16	1.38	1.00	0.75- 2.00	15	1.43	1.50	1.00- 2.50	29	1.09	1.00	0.75- 2.00
gaseous, per acre.....	29	1.90	2.00	1.25- 2.50	20	1.83	2.00	1.00- 2.50	54	1.73	2.00	1.00- 2.50
Baling—wire, per bale.....	15	0.11	0.10	0.09- 0.14	6	0.12	...	0.10- 0.13	28	0.13	0.12	0.10- 0.16
twine, per bale.....	47	0.10	0.10	0.08- 0.11	43	0.10	0.10	0.09- 0.13	65	0.11	0.10	0.10- 0.15
Silage—field harvesting, per acre.....	8	11.30	12.00	8.00-14.00	2	7.50	...	7.00- 8.00	1	7.00	...	...
per hour.....	7	9.70	10.00	6.00-13.00	4	11.00	...	9.00-13.00	8	12.10	12.00	10.00-18.00
hauling, per hour.....	1	2.50	...	...	0	...	...	...	1	2.00	...	...
blowing, per hour.....	0	...	...	...	2	2.25	...	1.50- 3.00	0	...	...	...
Silage—harvesting, hauling & blowing												
combined, per acre.....	2	13.50	...	12.00-15.00	1	5.00	...	...	1	10.00	...	...
per hour.....	3	13.00	12.00	12.00-15.00	6	12.80	12.00	10.00-18.00	11	14.20	...	10.00-20.00
Field hay chopping, per hour.....	2	10.00	10.00	10.00-10.00	2	11.50	...	8.00-15.00	0	...	...	...
Ear corn picking, per acre.....	30	5.07	5.00	4.50- 6.00	32	5.10	5.00	4.00- 6.00	65	5.22	5.00	5.00- 8.00
Picker sheller, per acre.....	10	6.80	7.00	6.00- 8.00	10	6.35	7.00	4.50- 7.50	23	7.11	7.00	6.00- 8.00
Corn combining, per acre.....	20	6.78	7.00	5.00- 7.50	15	6.70	7.00	5.00- 8.50	44	7.45	7.50	6.00- 8.00
per acre plus {	7	5.14	5.00	5.00- 6.00	5.20	5.00	5.00	5.00- 6.00	5.11	5.00	5.00	5.00- 6.00
per bushel }	+	0.02	+0.02	0.02- 0.02	+0.03	+0.03	+0.03	+0.02- +.05	+0.025	+0.03	+0.03	0.02- 0.04
Corn shelling, per bushel.....	40	0.026	0.025	0.02- 0.04	42	0.041	0.04	0.02- 0.06	73	0.028	0.03	0.02- 0.04
Corn drying, per bushel.....	9	0.09	0.10	0.05- 0.10	7	0.08	...	0.05- 0.10	26	0.075	0.10	0.04- 0.14
per % moisture removed per bushel..	0	...	...	...	5	0.01	0.01	0.01- 0.01	9	0.01	0.01	0.01- 0.01
Feed grinding, per bushel.....	8	0.05	...	0.03- 0.07	8	0.07	...	0.05- 0.10	2	0.08	...	0.05- 0.10
per ton	13	2.05	2.00	1.50- 4.00	18	2.79	3.00	1.75- 4.00	25	2.86	3.00	1.50- 4.00
Hired labor, per hour.....	41	1.29	1.25	1.00- 1.50	46	1.22	1.25	1.00- 1.75	70	1.31	1.25	1.00- 2.00
per day	4	10.60	10.00	10.00-11.50	3	9.00	...	5.00-12.00	7	11.40	10.00	10.00-15.00
per month	16	290	275	220-450	11	263	...	185-355	29	284	300	220-400